Saskatchewan
Environment

Saskatchewan's

GREEN STRATEGY

For a green and prosperous economy.

A healthy **environment** can support a strong **economy** and a strong economy must respect the health of the environment. The two are intrinsically linked. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of current and future generations through the integration of environmental stewardship and economic prosperity, supporting the goal of an advancing society. Increasingly, business leaders and others are talking about the importance of environmental stewardship.

As we began to talk to Saskatchewan people about how we can best care for the environment while planning for a strong economic future, they provided their perspectives on integration and balance. We have shared a number of their thoughts, along with others focusing on the importance of sustainability, with you in the pages that follow. As we continue that discussion we welcome your thoughts on how to move our province forward into a bright, strong and sustainable future.

Environment Society Economy

David Forbes,
Minister of Environment

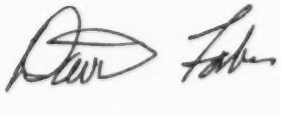
Minister's Message

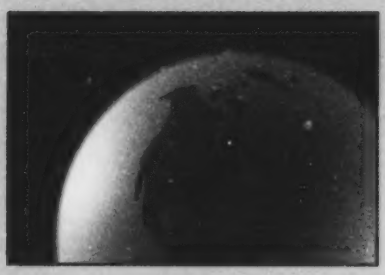
Saskatchewan people have always had a deep connection to the land, and its role in supporting life and livelihood. As is the case around the world, our understanding of the environment is deepening. Better research creates an appreciation for our environment's power and its fragility. We accept that expanded knowledge increases our ability to care for the land, water, and air to provide for our needs today, tomorrow and into the future.

We know that taking care of the environment is the right thing to do. A healthy environment provides people with a sense of confidence and certainty. It ensures continued quality of life supported by a strong sustainable economy.

Based on the work we have done to date, we believe the time is right for Saskatchewan people to look to the future and determine how to best build on the work underway that supports economic growth and environmental health.

Our government is committed to expanding our economy to ensure long-term sustainability. When fully developed, the Green Strategy will provide a vital framework for our province by providing a foundation for sustainable growth. The Green Strategy is about government, business and community working together to ensure our future is both prosperous and green.





Ecological Footprints

Measuring Ecological Footprints is a natural resource accounting tool that was developed in the early 1990s. It has become one of the most common methods used worldwide for measuring environmental performance and monitoring progress toward a sustainable future. Measurements include emissions, size of landfill area and the settled area per capita. The Ecological Footprint of a typical North American is about four to five hectares, which is very large by international standards. Indeed, if everyone on Earth lived like the average Canadian or American, we would need at least three such planets to live in a manner that would be sustainable.

Providing a Picture

Our understanding of how humans interact with our planet is growing daily. What we do today directly impacts the kind of world we will live in tomorrow. Our children and grandchildren will judge our actions, and the choices we make.

Expanded knowledge means the world is getting smaller, or at least our picture of what our world should look like becomes clearer as we better understand how the environment, society and the economy interrelate. The word we use to describe that picture or concept, is sustainability.

In 1987 the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development identified sustainability as: "Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Sustainability has three primary dimensions.

The **living environment** is a collection of all natural life supporting and responding to all human activity. It can be seen as the diversity of all life forms present in the land, water and air. It includes the landscapes and the environments in which people live.

Economic performance or creating a suitable standard of living is a measure of the goods and services produced, and a social consensus on whether the needs of people are being sufficiently addressed over an extended period of time.

All **human activity**, sometimes called lifestyle, creates a sense of purpose and meaning in the lives of people. This includes jobs and all activities relating to health and education and the creation of security for people. It also includes spiritual, religious, cultural and artistic involvement and contributions.

Society and the economy are wholly dependent on the natural ecology of the planet. Ecological considerations are integral to effective social and economic planning.

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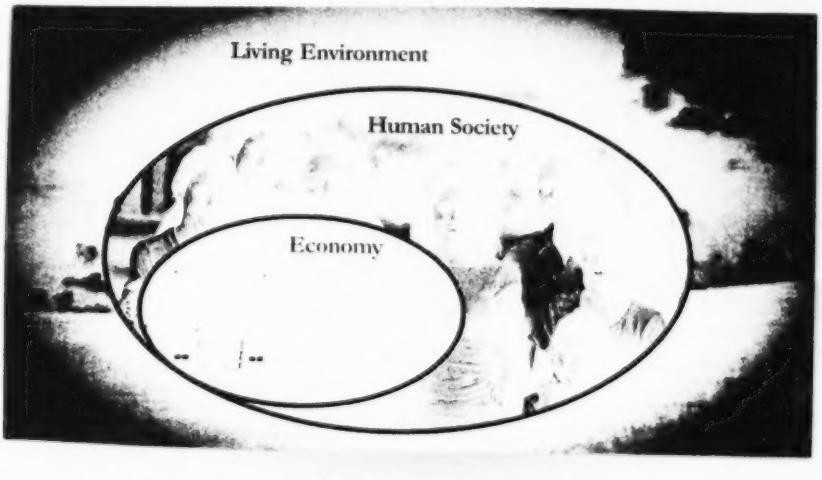

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Working Strategies for a Sustainable Future

Green Strategies are working models of sustainability in action. The development of a Green Strategy is not unique to Saskatchewan. Countries around the world are proving that environmental sustainability and economic vitality rely on each other. Through a shared vision and cooperative effort among all sectors of society, nations are demonstrating that a healthy environment, enhanced quality of life and a vibrant economy not only can exist; they must coexist to remain viable over time.

Sustainability planning is increasing as a global priority. Recent strategies from around the world include "Hope for the Future: The Western Australia Sustainability Strategy", 2003 and "Towards an Enduring Singapore: The Singapore Green Plan", 2012.

Examples of Green Strategies already underway in Canada include Manitoba's and Quebec's Sustainable Development Strategies and supporting legislation and Nova Scotia's Green Plan titled: "Towards a Sustainable Environment". Although approaches and issues vary, all of these plans and strategies aim to integrate environmental considerations into decision-making processes to ensure that the benefits received from the environment are maintained and enjoyed for generations to come.

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A Quick Snapshot

The last thirty years have witnessed the global economy steadily transform itself into a single market place where sustainability factors, such as knowledge, technology and innovation are increasingly becoming major drivers of growth. Opportunities may exist for better policy coordination within government, more effective regulatory and tax tools, new approaches to intergovernmental cooperation and better dialogue amongst stakeholders and members of the public about how we can work together for a sustainable society. A major challenge is to diversify Saskatchewan's economy, particularly in value-added opportunities and new green industries.

Natural resource industries including forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism can be the building blocks for a range of sustainable and value-added economic opportunities. Innovation in eco-efficiency[1] and other aspects of sustainability could provide opportunities that stimulate local innovation and economic activity while securing a healthy environment.

There is evidence that benefits realized from sustainable practices can translate into a positive impact on the financial bottom line. Records show that over the past 10 years the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI), which tracks the financial success of sustainability driven companies, has outperformed the Dow Jones Global Index (DJGI).

The public is also becoming more aware of the impact the environment has on their health and well-being and are demanding, as consumers and investors, that business and government implement sustainable practices. Some of the key environmental issues and policy priorities in Saskatchewan are climate change, wetland/riparian zone management, protection of water sources, biodiversity conservation, recognition of environmental stewardship practices, recognition of direct and indirect costs and benefits in decision making, and policy development that is integrated and focused on a geographic area.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment has recently affirmed its commitment to develop a national environmental sustainability policy. This policy will focus on improving environmental performance in Canada while maintaining competitiveness so that Canada will be able to respond to the global demand for sustainable products and services. Saskatchewan is also committed to strengthening our economy and encouraging community development while ensuring the protection of our natural wealth.

Seeking opportunities and removing constraints across local, provincial, national and international systems will shape our ability to respond to global environmental issues and emerging sustainable development markets.

"RBC Financial Group™ believes that sustained economic growth and a sound environment is inextricably linked and as a corporate citizen and financial services provider, we recognize our role in supporting and advocating sustainable business practices."

www.rbc.com/environment/index.html

"Energy conservation initiatives for government buildings has resulted in a 20 per cent decrease in energy use, and a 15 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions."

Saskatchewan Property Management

[1] Eco-efficiency involves dramatically reducing the amount of materials, energy and goods needed to produce goods and services

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve

A biosphere reserve, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), is an area that has important natural and ecological values. It is also a place where people live, work and enjoy a variety of economic and recreational activities based on respect for the environment. The concept of a biosphere reserve is that committees of representatives from local key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, business, conservation and education, work together to develop projects that link conservation with economic development in their region. The committees are voluntary and community based and not connected to governmental or regulatory authorities.

As of November 2000, UNESCO had designated 391 biosphere reserves in 94 countries around the world. Redberry Lake and the surrounding watershed was designated as a biosphere reserve in January 2000. The first such designation for Saskatchewan was supported by the Province of Saskatchewan, the community of Hafford, the Redberry Rural Municipality, Environment Canada and The Redberry Pelican Project (Canada) Foundation. The designation formally recognized the region's commitment to conserving biological diversity, the pursuit of sustainable economic development and the creation of opportunities for education, research and experimental approaches to improved land management.

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Our Global Responsibility

"The problem we face is how to use the planet's natural resources in a sustainable way. In other words, how do we ensure that resources are used in a way that per the Brundtland Report definition of 'sustainable development' ensures on the one hand that the needs of the present generation are met, whilst on the other ensuring that sufficient resources remain so that future generations are able to meet their needs."

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

"Sustainability is about creating long-term value for all stakeholders," says CEO Hal Kvisle. "This recognition is a reflection of our solid reputation, strong financial performance, and commitment to social responsibility."

www.transcanada.com/company/djsi2005.html

In Saskatchewan we enjoy the benefits of healthy ecosystems and a solid foundation for economic growth. Yet, it is not possible for the province to simply focus on achieving sustainability within our own borders. We are intimately connected to North America and the rest of the world, particularly through trade and sharing the same environment.

The task of a green and prosperous province requires we commit to play a role in helping to address global issues while focusing on achieving a sustainable future within the province. A shift to sustainability would contribute to solutions to some of the priority global issues identified by the *Global Environmental Outlook Report 2002* including:

- Nearly 50 per cent of the earth's land surface has been transformed by human activity, which affects the Earth's natural processes for renewal.
- Atmospheric greenhouse gases have increased over the past 130 years to the point where noticeable and sustained climate change is occurring.
- People in industrial countries account for about 20 per cent of the world population, yet consume 86 per cent of its aluminium, 81 per cent of its paper, 80 per cent of its iron and steel and 76 per cent of its timber.
- Growing invasive species and disease problems, including new and emerging viral diseases, are a reality around the globe.
- More than half of the earth's accessible fresh water is now being used, directly or indirectly. There are global concerns regarding water availability, quality and transboundary water management.
- The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased leading to increasing demands on species and their habitats and driving biodiversity loss.

The biennial Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is a snapshot of an ongoing worldwide environmental assessment process. It was initiated in response to the environmental reporting requirements of Agenda 21 and to a UNEP Governing Council Decision of May 1995.

Enhancing Saskatchewan's Reputation for Safe and Sustainable Food Production

With increasing competition in global markets, environmentally sensitive food production methods are becoming more important when marketing agricultural products internationally. Saskatchewan's Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program provides an opportunity for producers to capitalize on the province's long-standing tradition of stewardship.

In the last couple of years, agriculture policy, as expressed in the Agricultural Policy Framework, has implemented EFP as a major environmental component. Over $30 million has been set aside to promote the adoption of EFP by farm operators in Saskatchewan and to fund beneficial management practices which can help to remedy issues identified by those farm plans. An EFP involves a confidential self-assessment and planning process that producers can use to increase their awareness of environmental issues, to examine their current production practices, to identify potential risks and to develop a practical plan to manage those risks.

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A Greener and More Prosperous Economy

The Government of Saskatchewan has been committed to a greener and more prosperous economy for some time now. Among other things the Government has:

- Created the Office of Energy Conservation to develop and promote energy conservation initiatives to reduce energy costs for residents, communities and businesses.
- Established Climate Change Saskatchewan to create understanding and awareness about how climate change affects us and how we can reduce its impact.
- Partnered with Communities of Tomorrow/Centre for Sustainable Communities/Centre for Sustainable Infrastructure Research to support the development, adoption and adaptation of best practices and technology.
- Initiated a Water Conservation Strategy and watershed planning to ensure the protection and restoration of the province's water sources.
- Initiated implementation of Saskatchewan's Biodiversity Action Plan to guide efforts in improving policies, management systems and information in support of biodiversity conservation.
- Implemented a Saskatchewan Safe Drinking Water Strategy that identifies actions for protecting and improving the quality and sustainability of drinking water supplies and source waters.
- Adopted Environmental Farm Planning, a voluntary planning process to assist in the promotion of beneficial management practices for agricultural producers.
- Established the Saskatchewan Forest Centre to increase knowledge and stimulate innovation and technology transfer in support of a sustainable forest industry.
- Reduced Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's energy use by ten per cent as part of the Corporation's EcoPlan.
- Incorporated "green" into the business activities of Saskatchewan Property Management by purchasing hybrid vehicles, implementing recycling initiatives, conserving energy, achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards, and buying renewable energy.
- Developed SaskPower's Sustainable Energy Strategy and GreenPower Portfolio, which will include an increase in wind power generation capacity to 172 MW by December 2005, to promote and develop green energy initiatives.
- Supported the development of recycling stewardship programs for products such as beverage containers, used oil materials, scrap tires and pesticide containers.
- Supported the International Energy Agency Weyburn Carbon Dioxide Monitoring and Storage Project that examines techniques to store CO_2 and increase oil production.
- Created the Green Team student employment program to provide environmental related industry experience for Saskatchewan students.

Sustainable Communities

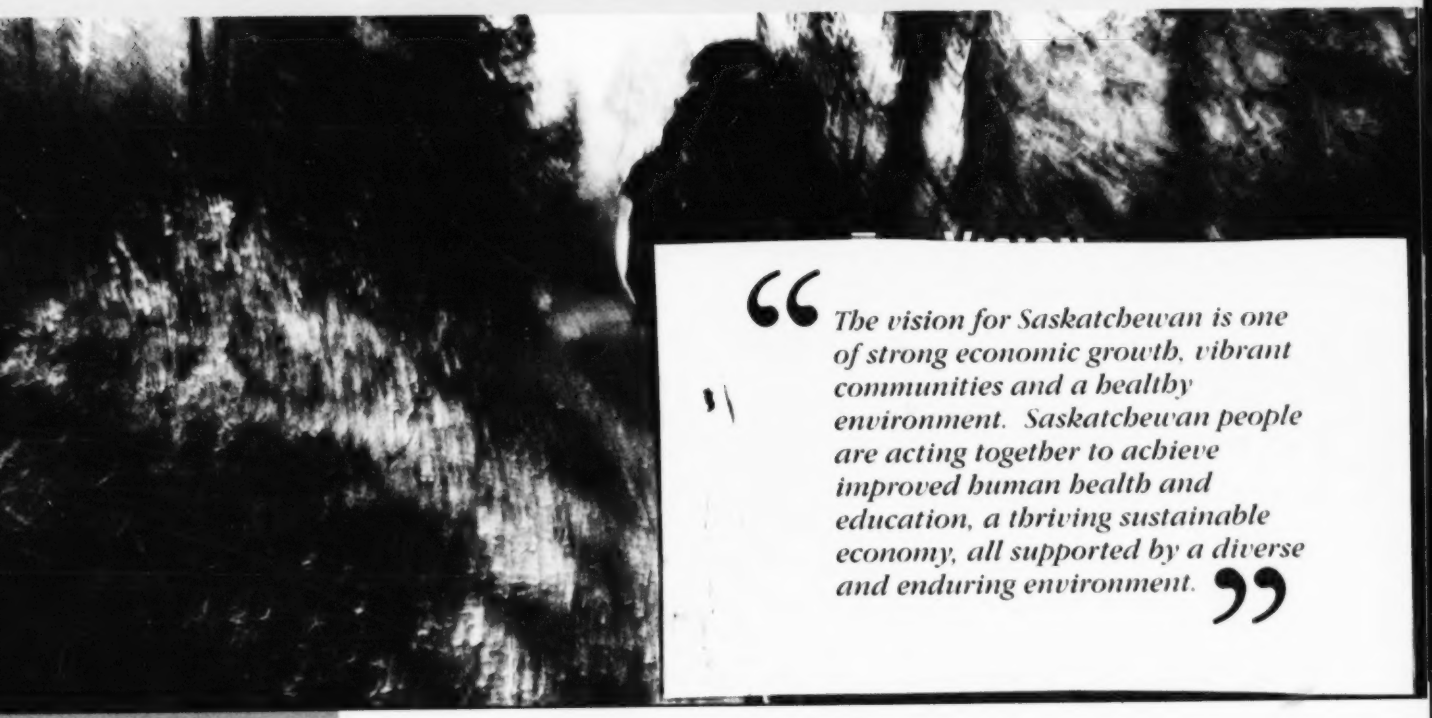
A sustainable community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources will be available for future generations. It seeks a better quality of life for all its residents while maintaining nature's ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy.

In Saskatchewan, communities are already benefiting from changing to environmentally responsible practices. The City of Saskatoon has a green procurement policy and has invested in developing energy retrofits. Saskatoon city council has recently approved the purchase of four electric/diesel hybrid transit buses. These buses will use the same blend of canola biodiesel currently used by two transit 'bio buses' already in operation.

The City of Regina adopted green procurement policies in the early 1990s. The City went through a major energy and building retrofit program in 2003 to reduce its water and energy bills. The changes will result in savings of approximately $230,000 a year. Regina, in partnership with Saskatchewan Communities of Tomorrow - Partners for Sustainability Inc., is striving to establish the City as a centre of excellence in research and development of best practices and technology for municipal management and the development of sustainable communities.

In 2001, the people of Craik began working on a long-term plan for a sustainable community-based project. The project, which includes the Craik EcoCentre, grew out of the need for local and tangible initiatives to address climate change. It could also have the potential to stimulate socio-economic revitalization of this rural community.

A Common Destination and the Path Forward



> *The vision for Saskatchewan is one of strong economic growth, vibrant communities and a healthy environment. Saskatchewan people are acting together to achieve improved human health and education, a thriving sustainable economy, all supported by a diverse and enduring environment.*

Based on these principles:

Health and Quality of Life
The people of Saskatchewan want to see action today to ensure a healthy economy and environment for future generations. A strong sustainable business sector and a healthy environment are essential for our long term prosperity, employment and quality of life.

A Respected and Protected Environment
Saskatchewan people accept the responsibility to manage the environment to the benefit of present and future generations. In particular, we aim to leave future generations a better environment overall.

Integration
Present and future generations will benefit most if environmental management concerns are integrated with and support social and economic goals. Sound environmental management will promote healthy ecosystems, improve human health and foster a thriving economy.

Industry Innovation
Saskatchewan industry is looking for opportunities to demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and innovation to develop a green economy.

Shared Responsibility
To be effective, social and economic decisions that integrate environmental protection and sustainability considerations require widespread support and commitment from all Saskatchewan people. All of us share the responsibility to manage the impact on local, regional and global environment of our activities and decisions. Knowledge should be used to inform prudent management decisions that implement shared values and bring shared benefits.

Youth as Change Agents
Youth will actively share in the responsibility of solutions - building, communicating sustainability values and implementing change.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally
Saskatchewan residents should think globally when acting locally, recognizing that there is ecological, economic and social interdependence among provinces, territories and nations.

According to Tom Murray, Project Manager for Corporate Partnerships at Environmental Defense, *"By using 75 percent PCW recycled content paper -- instead of virgin paper -- in its 2004 Canadian insert program, Office Depot reduced the demand on forests for wood; conserved energy, chemicals and water consumed during paper manufacturing; and reduced both solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions."*

Office Depot, Delray Beach
Brian Levine, 561/438-2895
blevine@officedepot.com
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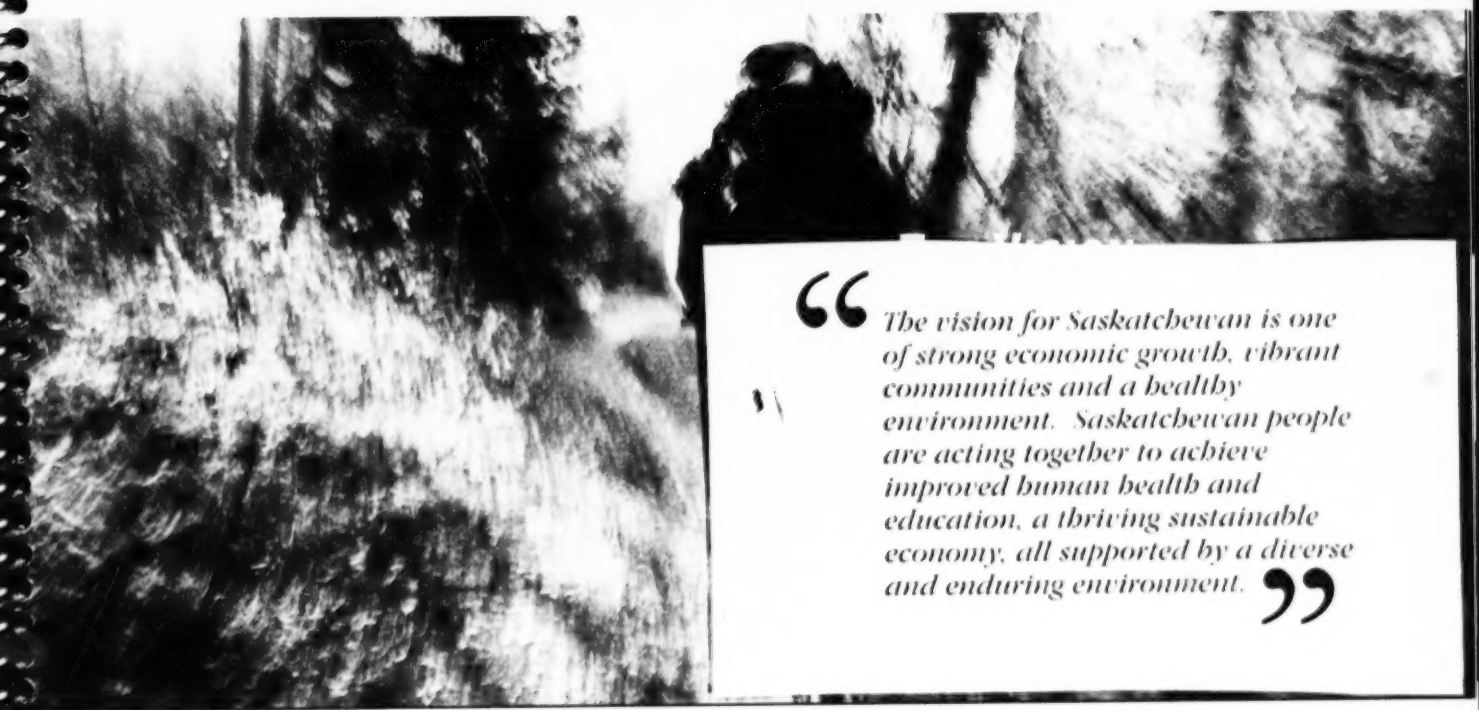

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Sustainable Business in a Green Economy

The natural resource sectors including forestry, mining and oil and gas, and allied industries have been an engine of economic growth and job creation for generations. People in many communities throughout the province and across Canada depend on these sectors for their livelihoods. Natural resources also contribute to the well-being of countless users in many more countries around the world through a wide variety of applications. Improvements in environmental performance can be observed in all of these sectors.

Saskatchewan has made great strides in sustainable forestry in recent years with the adoption of *The Forestry Resources Management Act* and better forest management practices intended to emulate natural disturbances such as fire. Forest management agreement (FMA) areas are assigned to FMA licensees who must develop and receive provincial approval of an environmental impact statement that assesses the effect their forest management practices have on the environment and on other users of the forest. Many FMA licensees have achieved certification pursuant to one or more internationally recognized sustainable forest management programs, such as ISO 14001 and the CSA Sustainable Forest Management Standard. Certification attests to sound environmental management of our forests while providing opportunities for expanding national and international markets for Saskatchewan forest products.

Mineral exploration and development can have a significant impact on the environment and local communities, in some circumstances extending well beyond the mine site. The mining industry has responded to public concerns regarding environmental performance by introducing a range of voluntary initiatives to better manage environmental and social issues arising from their operations and to communicate these to the public. These include developing industry codes of conduct, implementing environmental management systems, setting performance targets, producing environmental reports and providing financial assurances for mine decommissioning and reclamation. The Saskatchewan Mineral Exploration and Government Advisory Committee (SMEGAC) has produced *Mineral Exploration Guidelines for Saskatchewan* to help direct mineral exploration in an environmentally responsible manner.

The oil and gas industry is responding to sustainable development challenges on a collective as well as an individual company basis. Industry associations have been developing approaches for their industry sector members to advance corporate social responsibility and sustainable development. Overall, companies are recognizing the value of working collectively and cooperatively to develop voluntary solutions in forms such as voluntary codes of practice as well as voluntary action plans and accountability reports that are transparent to stakeholders.

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We Are Listening

In 2004, informal discussions were held with over 75 external organizations and businesses across the province representing various economic, social and environmental interests. As was expected, views on the concept of a greener and more prosperous economy reflected the range of backgrounds and experience of those who participated.

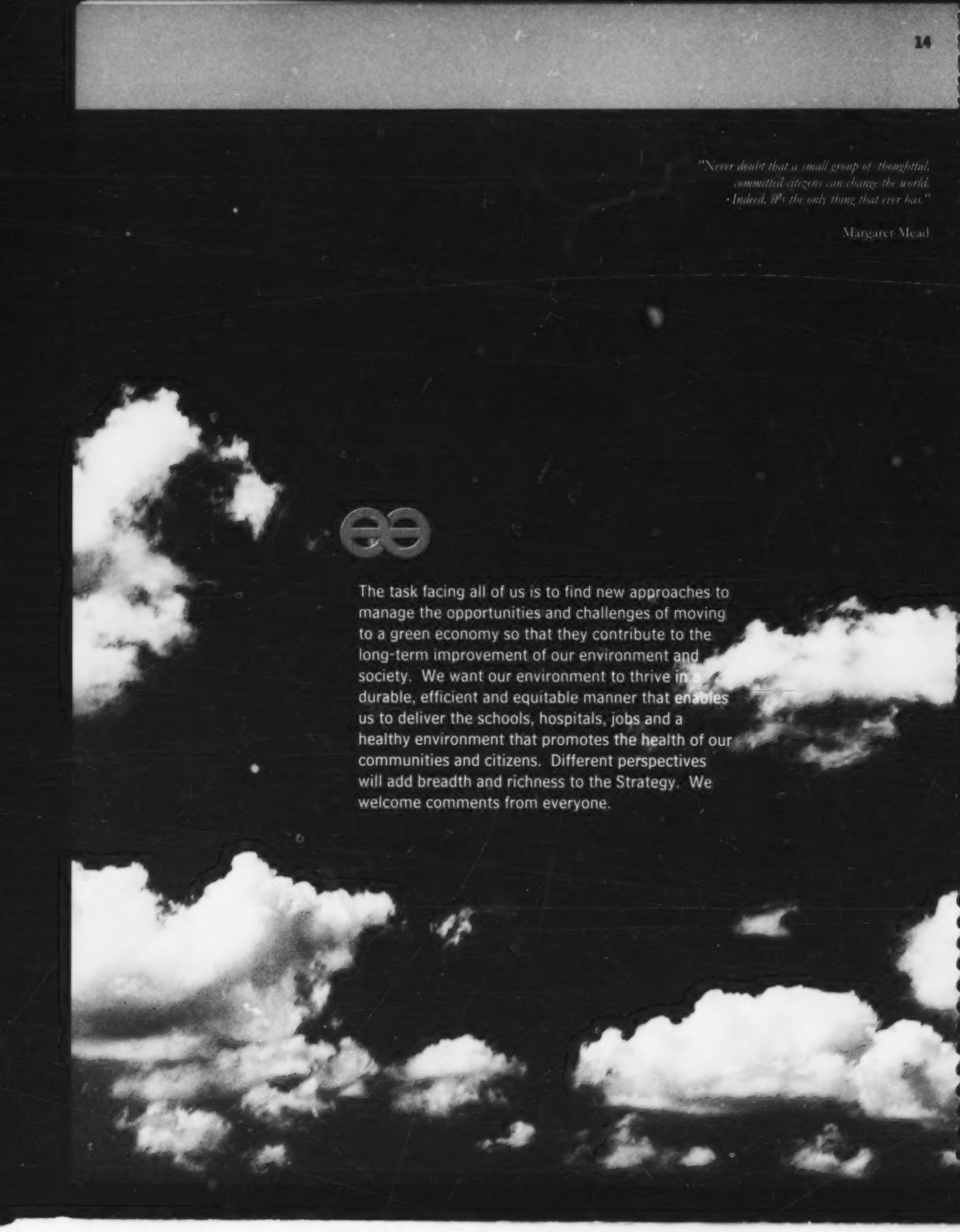
The viewpoints and recommendations expressed during the consultation and research regarding the approaches that other jurisdictions and the private sector are taking influenced the development of a proposed path forward. We are seeking feedback on the following framework along with your recommendation of priorities for action.

The following framework goals and strategic outcomes reflect some of the biggest challenges and opportunities we face as a province, as we begin to establish an integrated approach to link environment, economic and social factors.

Your feedback does not have to be confined to the areas outlined here.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead



The task facing all of us is to find new approaches to manage the opportunities and challenges of moving to a green economy so that they contribute to the long-term improvement of our environment and society. We want our environment to thrive in a durable, efficient and equitable manner that enables us to deliver the schools, hospitals, jobs and a healthy environment that promotes the health of our communities and citizens. Different perspectives will add breadth and richness to the Strategy. We welcome comments from everyone.

Pursuing a sustainable future for Saskatchewan requires both long-term changes and immediate action. The long-term vision recommended for the province can be focused on three goals:

Innovation Toward Sustainability

Within twenty-five years, Saskatchewan will have achieved a vibrant economy and a cleaner environment while satisfying human needs to improve our quality of life by using the best practical science and technology to foster innovation, economic growth opportunities and competitiveness as well as environmental sustainability.

A Respected and Protected Environment

Within twenty-five years, Saskatchewan will be a national leader in conserving, protecting and restoring the health and diversity of ecosystems to ensure healthy air, water, soil, biodiversity and ecosystems for the well-being and prosperity of current and future generations.

Shared Responsibility, Integration and Accountability

Starting now, governments of all levels, communities, businesses, schools, volunteer organizations, youth and citizens will participate and share in the responsibility for a society that is economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable.

We heard . . .

"Integration of environmental stewardship and economic prosperity is the only option that makes sense over the long term; the sooner the two sides are in sync, the sooner society will benefit."

Provincial Youth Advisory Committee

"Alternative energy options should include cogeneration, solar and assistance for geothermal (wind alone won't cut it)."

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Parks and Land Use Committee

"We have to protect resources for future generations while developing long-term economic initiatives"

First Nations Workshop, October 6, 2004

"We need to ensure we maintain competitiveness with other jurisdictions and maintain a level regulatory playing field."

Saskatchewan Petroleum Industries and Government Environment Committee; Saskatchewan Federation of Independent Business; Saskatchewan Mining Association; and Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

The feedback we received on this goal has been organized into two areas:

- Green Economy; and
- Green Energy and Reduction of Green House Gas Emissions

Green Economy

Strategic Outcome:
Ensure competitiveness on national and international markets through expanded green economic opportunities

One of our society's major challenges and opportunities is to find ways to make the environment and the economy work well together and explore green economic initiatives. Emerging environmental businesses present opportunities for economic activity creating critical links between environmental protection and new businesses, jobs and future wealth.

Potential Areas for Action:

- Streamlined and Efficient Environmental Regulatory Systems
- Co-Product Streams
- Industrial Efficiencies
- Green Tourism

Green Energy and Reduction of Green House Gas Emmissions

Strategic Outcome:
Saskatchewan will develop a diversified energy economy using green energy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change

Saskatchewan, along with the entire world, faces two enormous challenges in responding to climate change. First is the need to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions of green house gases, and secondly, the need to prepare and adapt to future climate change impacts. Both of these needs may end up transforming our economy and providing significant opportunities to join economic development with sustainable growth.

Potential Areas for Action:

- Increased Green Energy (including wind, solar and small scale hydro power)
- Energy Conservation
- Adaptation and Research

Alternative Energy
The Saskatchewan Research Council recently unveiled the world's first modified pickup trucks fuelled by a combination of hydrogen and conventional fossil fuels. They are continuing to develop the technology to make it economically available.

Natural Resources Stewardship

Strategic Outcome:
Sustainable use of renewable resources to maintain healthy ecosystems, healthy citizens and a healthy economy.

The natural environment and its biological and physical components are the foundation of a sustainable future. Wildlife, forests, fisheries, intact ecosystems and the natural processes that build our soils and clean our water are essential to our future. We are only beginning to understand the complexity and value of natural systems. Scientific research is revealing important links between human health and environmental quality, and the role of the environment as a foundation for a healthy economy and its contribution to social well-being.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Renewable Resource Stewardship
- Priorities for Representative Area Network
- Long-Term Provincial Parks Strategy
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainable Waste Management

Strategic Outcome:
Wise use of resources by producing less waste, using waste as a resource, increased recycling and ensuring effective waste management.

Sustainable waste management provides benefits to society by producing economic opportunities, creating jobs and saving money and resources. Reducing or effective management of waste that we produce is the best way to reduce the impact of waste on the environment. There are opportunities for increased eco-efficiency in production by looking at the design of products and the overall production process and to divert waste destined for landfills for use as materials in the manufacturing of other value-added products and to ensure efficient waste management.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Elimination/Minimization and Management of Waste
- Multi-Municipality Waste Management Systems

We heard . . .

"Healthy stewardship is everyone's responsibility; if you don't have a healthy environment the economic opportunities are reduced and they will be less diversified."

Saskatchewan EcoNet

"There is no reason, with appropriate design and planning, that environmental stewardship and economic prosperity need to be in conflict."

Association of Professional Engineers and Geophysicists of Saskatchewan

"We should think about the elimination of waste rather than simply waste management and recycling."

Saskatchewan EcoNet

The feedback we received on this goal has been organized into four areas:
- Natural Resources Stewardship,
- Sustainable Waste Management,
- Water Stewardship; and
- Healthy People, Ecosystems and Economy.

A Respected and Protected Environment

We heard . . .

"The most important environmental issue that affects respondents is drinking water quality."

Environmental Issues Public Opinion Survey, March 2005

"Pesticides are a health issue and children are especially vulnerable; Saskatchewan should take steps to reduce children's exposure to pesticides."

Campaign for Pesticide Reduction in Provincial Policy

"True environmental stewardship requires the application of the 'precautionary principle'."

Saskatchewan EcoNet

Water Stewardship

Strategic Outcome:
Stewardship of water resources through the protection, conservation and restoration of the quantity and quality of fresh water in the province.

In Saskatchewan we are concerned about adequate supplies of water and we want assured access to safe, clean water. Healthy aquatic ecosystems provide numerous benefits including: protection of drinking water supplies, wildlife and fish habitat, carbon sinks, ground water recharge, moderation of downstream flooding and assured water supplies for economically sustainable growth.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Watershed Planning
- Wetland and Riparian Retention
- Water Conservation
- Secure Supply

Healthy People, Ecosystems and Economy

Strategic Outcome:
Protection and restoration of air, land, and water quality will enhance human health, economic, environmental and social well-being.

Many well-intentioned activities designed to improve our living condition and promote development can have environmental consequences. Environmental policies can do more than manage crisis by ensuring that processes are in place that anticipate and prevent problems in a manner that maintains quality land, air and water.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Ecosystem Risk Assessment
- Examine Use of Pesticides
- Air Shed Associations
- Contaminated Site Clean-up

Shared Responsibility, Integration and Accountability

Leading By Example

Strategic Outcome:
The government of Saskatchewan is a leader in managing its operations in a sustainable manner.

We heard that it is important to you that the government demonstrates commitment to sustainable development in its own policies and operations as well as show leadership in finding opportunities to stimulate a green economy in the province. An improved integrated policy decision-making process can ensure the appropriate balance between environmental and economic considerations and seeking opportunities to engage industry, communities and individuals in moving towards sustainability.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Green Codes of Practice
- Stewardship Plans for Government
- Strengthened Compliance and Enforcement

Informed and Engaged Citizens

Strategic Outcome:
A public that is knowledgeable about the environment and committed to action to reduce our everyday environmental impact.

Saskatchewan communities including cities, rural municipalities and regions are eager to improve their quality of life and sustain a healthy economy. Many are already committed to the goal of sustainability. Achieving sustainability is a long term or generational pursuit. The public and stakeholders can be engaged through education, awareness building and incentives to build support for sustainability strategies, policies and programs. Awareness and understanding of the concept of sustainability is essential if we intend to move to a green and prosperous society.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Education
- Incentives to Make it Easier to Act "Green"
- Demonstration and Recognition of Application of Sustainability
- Engagement of Youth to Champion Sustainability

Intergovernmental Engagement

Strategic Outcome:
Saskatchewan engaged in moving towards sustainability by thinking globally, planning regionally and acting locally.

Governments, business or individuals acting alone are unlikely to address sustainability effectively. There is economic, ecological and social interdependence among provinces and nations. Working cooperatively in the province, within Canada and internationally, to integrate economic, environmental, human health and social factors in decision-making will be important to achieve comprehensive and equitable solutions for a sustainable society.

Potential Areas for Action:
- Bilateral Agreements with Other Jurisdictions
- Working Collaboratively Across Governments to Achieve Sustainability

We heard . . .

"Government needs to be a leader and build credibility with transparent action and decision-making."

Saskatchewan EcoNet

"Government will have to comply with standards and conduct internal audits to demonstrate leadership in order to convince industry that this is the way to go."

Saskatchewan Petroleum Industry and Government Environmental Committee

"A cultural shift is required to move away from the "keeping up with the Jones" mentality and this level of change must resonate with an individual's motivations. This may require the use of rewards and incentives, regulation and tax changes etc. until sustainable practices become common."

Regina Regional Economic Development Authority Future Leaders

"We believe we can have it all - a clean and healthy environment, and a strong sustainable economy with full employment, strong workers' rights and a progressive social infrastructure to protect all citizens."

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour - Policy Statement on the Environment and Sustainable Development

The feedback we received on this goal has been organized into four areas:
- Leading by Example
- Informed and Engaged Citizens
- Intergovernmental Engagement; and
- Measuring, Reporting and Accountability.

Measuring, Reporting and Accountability

"Environmental monitoring and reporting are essential in order to assess progress and adapt policies and action."

Saskatchewan EcoNet

"Government needs to provide quality information on the environment that allows industry to make informed decisions."

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

Strategic Outcome:
Government is accountable for reporting progress on moving to a sustainable society

It is important that we are able to assess whether what we are doing is moving us in the direction of a greener and more prosperous economy. Government needs to be accountable to Saskatchewan residents for progress or lack of progress towards a green economy.

As demands increase from society and industry to address environmental concerns the demand for timely, integrated ecosystem information is increasing. Business, in particular, can benefit from environmental assessment through anticipation, prevention and mitigation of environmental consequences that can, in turn, lead to increased opportunities and minimized risks and liability.

Potential Areas for Action:

- Integrated Monitoring
- Sustainability Reporting
- Environmental Commissioner

How to Get Further Involved in Developing the Strategy

This consultation document provides a vision, goals and strategic outcomes as a foundation for the development of a Green Strategy for Saskatchewan to contribute to a future that is both prosperous and green. A Green Strategy offers the promise of sustainability by promoting a healthy environment that supports the lives and livelihoods of Saskatchewan people.

This Strategy will compliment the government's commitment to a green and prosperous economy. The Green Strategy will also provide direction for government departments and Crowns and create new opportunities for cooperation and partnerships between government, business and the community.

Steps to Develop the Green Strategy

Phase 1

Early Discussions With Key Stakeholders July 2004 to March 2005
Informal consultation with over 75 external organizations. Care was taken to ensure that a broad spectrum of viewpoints was heard and, as a result, discussions occurred with representatives from businesses, labour, industries, rural and urban municipalities, First Nations, youth organizations, environmental non-government organizations, agriculture and the science and technology sector.

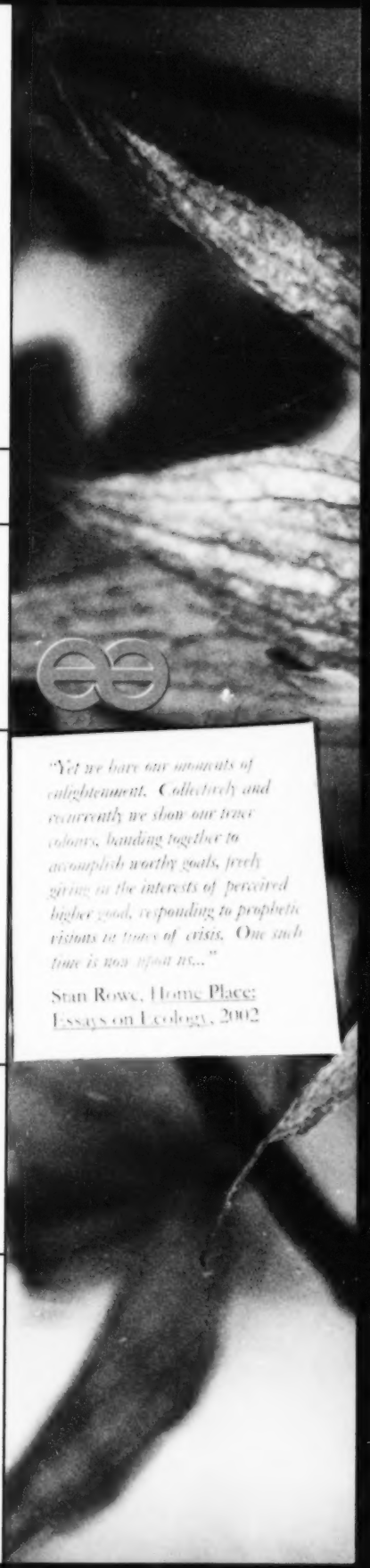
Phase 2

Public Consultation Document and Web Site Launch August 2005
This public consultation document and a web site have been developed that describes the proposed framework for a Green Strategy and provides an interactive online process that allows users to provide input on the framework.

Green Forums September/October/November 2005
Additional consultation will be conducted through a series of themed Forums with invited stakeholders that bring together differing points of view. The objective is to develop a common understanding of the issues, identify tradeoffs and establish future directions and actions that are supported by more than one faction or group.

Phase 3

Green Strategy Development 2006
Following formal consultation the government will develop a Green Strategy for Saskatchewan and anticipates release in 2006. Government will monitor and review progress to sustainability on a regular basis.



"Yet we have our moments of enlightenment. Collectively and recurrently we show our truer colours, banding together to accomplish worthy goals, freely giving in the interests of perceived higher good, responding to prophetic visions in times of crisis. One such time is now upon us..."

Stan Rowe, Home Place: Essays on Ecology, 2002

Written submissions are welcomed

We are committed to seeking the views of residents of the province. You are encouraged to contribute your ideas and aspirations for both a green and prosperous province relating to concepts in this paper. In particular, we welcome your view on what are the priority issues and how these can be addressed, especially around the role of the individual, business and the community in facilitating change to a more sustainable economy and how government can support the transition. Please send your submissions to:

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Saskatchewan Environment
Room 520-3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 5W6

Email:
Strategycomments@serm.gov.sk.ca

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More Information

For more information about work underway to develop the Green Strategy and sustainable development, visit the Green Strategy website at www.se.gov.sk.ca/greenstrategy.

Cypress Hills flower photos courtesy of Jim Knelson.
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